(a) the amount sanctioned to West Bengal for development of National Highways in the State during 2002-03;

(b) whether frequent deterioration of National Highways in the flood affected States are kept in mind at the time of allocation; and

(c) the number of culverts on National Highways damaged in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) An amount of Rs. 90.00 crore is allocated for development of National Highways in the State of West Bengal during 2002-2003.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) 22 Culverts on National Highways in the State of West Bengal were damaged during the current year's floods. Temporary restoration of these culverts has been done and National Highways were made traffic worthy.

Bridges and Culverts in NER

303. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whethe Government have undertaken any exercise for identifying weak and narrow bridges and culverts on the National Highways in the North East Region in general and Assam in particular;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when reconstruction work of the bridges and culverts identified for the purpose would commence and finish?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There are 243 bridges and 355 culverts on National Highways requiring reconstruction in the North Eastern Region. Out of this, 58 bridges and 98 culverts are in Assam.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) These bridges and culverts are provided for implementation during 10th Five Year Plan and will be taken up as per the availability of funds.

Coastal Highways in Gujarat

304. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that though Gujarat has 25 per cent of the country's coast line with many ports but the coastal highway along this coast has not been upgraded to National Highway;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government plan to correct this anomaly and if so, the likely period in which its upgradation is planned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) to (c) The declaration of any road as National Highway depends not only on the consideration that it runs along the coast but on several other considerations including traffic needs, *inter-se* priority on all India basis and availability of resources. Notwithstanding the above, a length of approximately 362 kms. running along the coast line in Gujarat has already been converted into National Highway.

Roads in Orissa

305. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA:

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the report captioned 'Cyclone-ravaged roads bumpy in Orissa' which appeared in The New India Express dated the 16th December, 2002;

(b) what is the position of different stretches ravaged in the devasting cyclone of 1999 and floods of 2001, awaiting repairs; and

(c) whether Centre is over-seeing the repair works and helping the State for expeditious completion of the projects?